

'Helping you build expertise in Welfare

Benefits'

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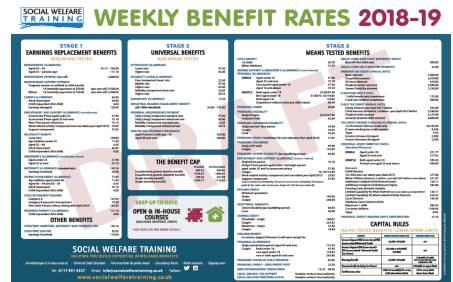
Free Benefits Newsletter

for professionals

Benefits Rate Poster for 2018/ 2019

Ensure you get the next Benefits Rate Poster for 2018/2019 (due in mid January 2018) by checking you are subscribed to free newsletter [click here](#). All subscribers will be sent the new poster automatically free of charge.

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Changes include- The Carer's Allowance Earnings Rule will be increased from £116 to £120 a week, Non-Dependant Deductions (NDDs) will also be up-rated in line with prices and the majority of working-age benefits will be frozen at their 2015-16 levels for four years. Premiums paid to disabled people receiving working age benefits and to Employment and Support Allowance claimants in the Support Group, will increase in as per the Consumer Prices Index (CPI) which was 3.0% in September 2017.

Food Banks- recommendations

Trussell Trust(along with CPAG) have produced a [detailed report](#) on the use of foodbanks. '...We urge the government, therefore, to ensure that there are robust systems in place – the safety net beneath the safety net – to protect vulnerable claimants when things do go wrong. This report highlights a number of actions that could help secure the change needed. In particular, we would like to see exiting provisions – such as short-term benefit advances and hardship payments – be better advertised, given ongoing evidence of low awareness among food bank users of their existence....'

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PIP Descriptor Changes – unlawful

The changes to the March 2017 PIP descriptors ruled out the descriptor mobility activity 1 (planning and following journeys) for many clients with mental health conditions. The government added to parts c, d and f..'For reasons other than psychological distress'. [The High Court has ruled](#) that these changes are unlawful. A full hearing has been listed for June 2018.

Increases in Housing Benefit Non Dependent Deductions(weekly)

	2017/ 2018	2018/ 2019
Aged under 25 and on Income Support (IS) or income-based Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA(IB)) or ESA(IR) which does not include an amount for the support component or work-related activity component	nil	nil
Aged 25 or over and on IS or JSA(IB), or aged 18 or over and not in remunerative work	14.80	15.25
In receipt of main phase ESA(IR)	14.80	15.25
In receipt of Pension Credit	nil	nil
Aged over 18 or over and in remunerative work		
- gross income: less than £139.00	14.80	15.25
- gross income: £139.00 to £203.99	34.00	35.00
- gross income: £204.00 to £264.99	46.65	48.05
- gross income: £265.00 to £353.99	76.35	78.65
- gross income: £354.00 to £438.99	86.95	89.55
- gross income: £439.00 and above	95.45	98.30

UC- no more new Live Service claims

The government has issued guidance to Housing Benefit staff [HB Bulletin U4/2017](#) in connection with some of the changes announced in the Autumn Budget 2017([see our guide](#)).

(See also our guide to the [roll out timetable](#))

'...Universal Credit live service will cease to take new claims from 1 January 2018...

Existing Universal Credit live service claimants will continue unaffected and we will maintain the existing caseload....this includes..

-where a site is transitioning from live service to full service

-changes of address

-partner joining an existing Universal Credit claim. and

partnership separation. This will be classed as a change in circumstances and both claimants will remain on Universal Credit (if still appropriate)

-where a claimant has been working and their earnings have exceeded the maximum amount, their entitlement will be reduced to nil due to their earnings. Their claim will stay open for up to 6 months within the six month re-award period.'

Book Now for our [updated Universal Credit 2018](#) and our [Housing Costs and Universal Credit 2018](#) courses.

UC- you can reclaim legacy benefits in live service areas

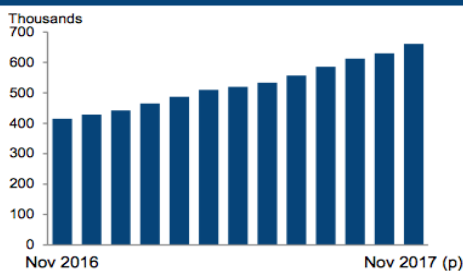
'...Where a claimant terminates their Universal Credit live service claim by choice they will be able to make a new claim to HB straight away. Claimants in full service areas will not be allowed to terminate their claim and make a claim for HB.' [HB Bulletin U4/2017](#)

Claimants will want to consider doing this particularly if they are worse off under Universal Credit.

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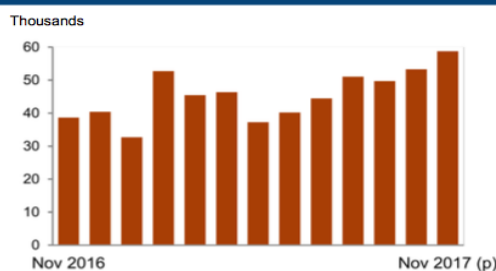
UC- Latest Statistics

660 thousand claimants At 9 November 2017



The number of people on Universal Credit rose to 660 thousand in November 2017. This is a 4 per cent increase from last month.

Starts at 54 thousand Month to 9 November 2017



The total number of starts that have been made since Universal Credit began is 1.2 million. The number of starts made to Universal Credit was 54 thousand in the month up to 9 November 2017.

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